

Consumption Markets & Culture

Call for Papers: Special Issue on “Moving Consumption”

Editors:

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This special issue aims to assume the task by CMC to contextualize consumption, bringing it out of the close circle of the consumer and his/her brain, mind or culture, and in touch with larger structures, as well as with disciplines previously not often used in studies of consumption (for other examples, see Aspara, 2009, on perspectives from Art and Design; Burton, 2011, on whiteness theory 2011; and Borgerson, 2009, on materiality following anthropologist Daniel Miller). In order to move consumer research forward, we propose to study moving consumption.

Historically consumer research moved itself dramatically, notably when it decided to broaden its focus from buyer to consumer behavior, from the shop to the home, from acquisition to disposal, use and discarding, along the idea that consumption activities are not restricted to shopping places and marketing issues, but encompass all aspects of human life. As a consequence, consumption should be studied in all its aspects, be they commercial or not (Holbrook 1984; Holbrook, 1985; Holbrook, 1987). Interestingly, Consumer research accomplished this move in moving itself, in the physical sense of the expression, when in 1986 a team of its leaders decided to travel the routes of American consumption and gather new facts about all aspects of consumption behavior through the well-known adventure of the *Consumer Behavior Odyssey* (Belk, 1991; Belk and al., 1989). But paradoxically, if consumer research moved both conceptually and physically, we know little about the relationship between consumption and motion.

In order to open up the field of consumption this is precisely this relationship that we propose to explore. We invite contributions along the lines of consumer's physical but also mental moves: how they move, what they move, and also what moves them. Consumers move from shopping to consuming places, but we should get a better knowledge about what happens during their journeys, “around” and “between” buying and consuming; how physical moves, sensorial moves, market devices and other settings shape consumption.

Our theme “Moving consumption” also implies moving consumer research forward by challenging consumption as a complex field of actors, processes, practices and modes of thought, and arguing that consumption needs to be studied by innovative trans-disciplinary perspectives—perspectives that overcome many of the traditional discursive, theoretical, and methodological dichotomies. This means not only acknowledging the recent interest in consumption studies following the paths opened by Actor-network theory (Brembeck et al, 2007, Cochoy, 2004, 2011), theories of practice (Shove et al, 2007; 2012), and sensory ethnography (Pink, 2010, Valtonen, Markuksela & Moisander, 2010). It also opens up for engaging with mobility studies. The ‘new mobilities’ paradigm encompasses both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world, as well as the more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space and the travel of material things within everyday life (Hannam, Sheller & Urry 2006). A related issue is that of the role of the larger frames, such as the managerial, technical or governmental constructs and instruments that shape markets at large (see the June 2012 issue of CMC, Geiger and al., 2012) but that also and more specifically “move” consumers from the outside, to the point of challenging the view of the isolated free decision maker and redefining consumer agencies and identities (Moisander and al., 2010; Cochoy, 2011).

Of course, external moves closely interact with internal ones, and such interactions deserve attention. Here, we join the interest of several scholars in the body (Mol, 2002), senses (Pink, 2010), affects (Massumi, 2002), interacting bodies (Degan & al., 2010, Arnoldi & and Borsch, 2007, Piette, 2010), and new forms of technologies tightly coupled to and surveying our bodies and the way they move. This also paves the way for contributions along the lines of sensory marketing (Hultén, 2009) and neuromarketing (Fugate, 2007; Lee and al., 2007, Senior and Lee, 2008, Schneider & Woolgar, 2012).

To our minds consumers form a fleeting entity; they are living, moving and swarming. Hence, if we want to account for them, we should study them in their real life settings (Du Gay, 2004; McFall, 2004, Pink, 2004), and take the senses (Pink, 2010), practices (Warde, 2005,) and also the devices and settings that shape consumption as part of the explanation. We therefore also welcome contributions focusing on inventive methods such as photo-elicitation (Heisley and Levy, 1991), video shadowing (Czarniawska, 2007) go-alongs (Kusenbach, 2003), visual anthropology (Schroeder, 2004, Pink 2007, Piette, 2010), experimental sociology (Gaver, 1999), quantitative ethnography, archaeology of the present, and so on. These are all appropriate tools to capture the elusive consumer (Ekström & Brembeck, 2004) moving in/of complex fields of actors, processes and practices.

Deadline for proposals is November 1, 2012. Proposals should be 2-3 pages long. After preliminary review by the editors, selected authors will be invited to submit full papers by March 31, 2013.

Proposals can be sent to: Helene.Brembeck@cfk.gu.se

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